

## Sermon- Jesus' Divinity Reveal

Scripture: John 5: 16-30

Sunday, February 4, 2018

Last week we looked to one of Jesus' healing miracles. But what was special about how Jesus performs this healing miracle was that he does it on a Sabbath. And the big deal about that is that you are not supposed to work on the Sabbath. So the Jewish authorities when they find out that Jesus worked on the Sabbath and even asked this man to walk with his mat on the Sabbath, they lose interest in the healed man and go straight for the big fish, Jesus himself. Now our verse begins with these words, the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. The word harassing can also be translated as pursue or even persecute. So the bottom line is, they want to get Jesus for violating the Sabbath. Now if you are a good Mennonite you are thinking, why did Jesus have to ruffle feathers and deliberately violate the Sabbath when he knew it would lead to a confrontation? That is not what a peacemaker would do. So why did he do it? Our scripture passage for today addresses just that. And that is what we are going to explore today.

The first thing that Jesus says in response to his accusers gives the religious leaders a real shock. He tells them, you know who my Father is? My Father is God himself. And I am too. And you want to know why I healed on the Sabbath? Because my Father is always working on the Sabbath. I see what He does and a do the same thing. Whoaa! If you were standing there and could see the Pharisees at that time, you would see their jaws drop. Because they were after Jesus for a Sabbath violation. Jesus in explaining Himself claims divinity. For any human to do that would be the sin of blasphemy. Or the sin of dishonoring God. And the punishment for dishonoring God was being stoned to death. And that is not a law that these chaps made up. The blasphemy law is right in the

book of Leviticus 24:16, from the hand of Moses, the man who used to meet God almost face to face. So our Pharisees are looking at Jesus first as a common trouble maker. Now they think he has committed blasphemy, a crime for which you can be stoned to death. Of course you are not dishonoring God by claiming you are God, if you are God right? So Jesus was not breaking any real law. You see the blasphemy law was made for humans. Jesus on the other hand was God and he came to reveal God to us at a level never before revealed to human beings and so this is where he pulls the curtain back on the nature of God Himself. He introduces to humans the concept that within the Godhead, there is the Father and the Son. The Father is God and the Son is God. The Father and Son love each other. And what the Father does, the Son sees and does the same thing. And the Pharisees are just standing there with their jaws dropped.

Now of course claiming you are divine is a very self exalting thing right if you are a regular human being. And these Pharisees are looking at someone who in every way looks like a regular human being. Of course Jesus had just done a really incredible healing miracle. But still. For Jesus, he was not trying in any way to exalt himself. He was just doing his job and revealing God to people and what makes this challenging was that he was in his human form. So how does Jesus counter the impression that he is just exalting Himself? He reveals something else about himself that I would say is equally shocking. His humility. Think about this, in verse 19 after explaining that He is equal to the Father, Jesus also says, "I tell you the truth, the Son does nothing by Himself. He does only what he sees his father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. In fact the end of this section in verse 30, he reinforces this though by saying, "I don't do anything with my own authority". Later in John in Jn 12:9 he says, I do not speak with my own authority. So right after he is saying he is God, in another sense he is also claiming a very lowly position by saying he has no authority of Himself. Jesus even carries this a step further in verse 30 and says, "I only carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will." So Jesus wants his listeners to hold two facts in their minds

together- the fact that he is God, and everything that comes with it, creator, all powerful, all knowing and all kinds of things we will never understand and then the fact that he is one who does not function of his own authority and neither does he do what he chooses to do. He only operates on the authority given to him by His Father and he only does His Heavenly Father's will 100% of the time. Jesus understands that people who claim to have authority from themselves are only seeking to lift themselves up in the eyes of the people around them. In John 7:19 he says, "anyone who speaks with his own authority seeks his own glory". And Jesus is not seeking his own glory. He is not trying to impress anybody or make himself look good in anybody's eyes. He is simply communicating the truth- that He and the Father are one. And between the two, he is the one who has no authority, the Father is the source of all authority. Yes Jesus is God and yet he is more humble than any human being who ever lived. You see Jesus functions with the Father's authority so it is not that he had no authority. It was just not his own. And he did not have to tell anybody that. But that is not who Jesus is. Jesus is free to tell these Pharisees who consider themselves to be great authorities on theology and scripture that he himself has no self-derived authority and no self-will. Jesus is the most powerful and yet the most humble being. And so Jesus tells the Pharisees, yes I am God and yet I do not do anything on my own. Now try holding those two thoughts about Jesus in your head!

But wait, there is more. In Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees, He does not just claim to be God and also prove his humility. Jesus' says, as God, I want to share some fascinating things about God that only only someone who is God can tell you. You listen and then decide for yourself who is talking to you. So what does Jesus let these people in on? Well is in verse 22, Jesus tells the Pharisees, when you look inside the Godhead, you will see another fascinating dynamic between Father and Son. Yes all authority comes from the Father, but in spite of having all the authority, and therefore the right to be the judge of the universe, the Father judges no one. In fact the Father gives the full

responsibility of judging to the Son. You know why, because the Father wants the Son to be honored as much as he is. In fact Jesus reveals that the Father and Son are equal in honor and more than that they are equivalent in honor. Say, “equivalent in honor”. That means if you honor one, you honor both. When you dishonor one you dishonor both. So remember, God the Son bends his will completely to God the Father. God the Father is the source of all authority and passes that authority to the Son. Along with that authority God also gives the Son the responsibility to judge the world. And the Father and Son are honored equivalently. Say, the “Father and Son are honored equivalently”.

Now all that information on how the Father and Son are related was to build the foundation for the important part that Jesus wanted to share with them. The most important part is this. Our Father God is also the source of all life. And the Father then grants that life giving power to the Son. In verse 21 it says, the Father raises people from the dead. The Son also has been given that power to raise people from the dead. And the Son gives life to anyone he wants to. How does he do it? In verse 24 Jesus says, “if anyone listens to the Son and believes that God who sent the Son, they will have eternal life”. They will pass from spiritual death to life right away. Those who listen to the voice of the Son of God, will live. And the way it works is, one day the voice of the Son of God will be heard across the land, even those who are in the grave. That voice will literally bring everyone to life. At that point, those who were never spiritually dead will go on with Jesus to enjoy eternal life. But those who have refused to obey the voice of the Son and believe who he is and follow Him will receive their eternal judgement.

So what has Jesus just revealed about the mysteries within the Godhead. It is the Father who has all authority to judge. And what does the Father do? He does not hold on to his rights but gives this authority to His Son. We learn that between the Father and the Son there is an equivalence of honor. And finally, you need to know that the Father is the source of life-giving power. And again what does he do with this power? He gives this same life giving power to the Son. So the Son can literally give life to anyone he chooses.

And how does the Son give life? He looks for people who are simply willing to believe and hear the Son's voice. Now the word hear actually means listen and obey. So people who listen to the Son and obey are given new spiritual eternal life that comes from the Son and ultimately from the Father in Heaven.

Why is he telling all this to the Pharisees? Because remember they were coming at Jesus to persecute him for healing on a Sabbath. Jesus knows that these people need healing too. If only they themselves could recognize who Jesus was, they would have asked Jesus for the eternal life that he was telling them he had the power to give them. Did they ask Jesus for this eternal life? Unfortunately they don't at this point at least. Maybe some of them would come to that point later on. We don't know.

But I want to address one question that may have come to your mind at some point. That is, Jesus shared all this about the inner workings of God. But how is any human being to know if all that is true? Because you and I have not been to heaven to verify for ourselves. Good question! That is where the work of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit comes in. You see it is the Holy Spirit who acts in us to reveal and illuminate the things of God. Remember when Jesus asks Peter, the famous question, "who do you say I am?" And Peter gives the right answer, "You are the Christ, Son of the living God". And Jesus says, "This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood but by my Father in Heaven." And how does the Father in heaven reveal things to people here on earth? I Cor 2 Paul says, God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. So those who allow the Holy Spirit to operate in their lives even before He comes to take permanent residence, will be able to hear the things that Jesus is revealing to them about God and sense deep in their inner being that this is true. That is what Jesus means when he says, he is looking for people who will listen to his voice. They are *his* sheep. His sheep believe God and are given life by the Son.

Our passage today gives us a glimpse of how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit operate. So what does this understanding of the inner workings of the apply to our day to day lives?

The first thing is, our lives and actions should correlate to our faith. Because when it do something that can only be explained by God's mysterious leading, people are going to ask you about it, like they asked Jesus. To you and me the questions may be, how can you forgive so and so or how can you still have hope in spite of spending 100 days in a hospital? And that is when you make your big reveal. You have to tell them that you are a child of God. And this is what God wants you to do. Now if people don't know God, when they hear you say these things they are going to be super offended. They are going to think that you are super arrogant to claim this kind of connection to God. When Ahia was born I remember my boss in India many years ago asked me what her name was and what it meant. I told him her name means, God is my Father. And he looked at me and said you are the most egoistical guy I have met. Because he thought I wanted everybody to know that I was God! Can you imagine that. So I explained to the best of my ability that it was not me being referred to in the name but he just could not get it. But the fact is that if you are born again, you have God residing inside of you. That statement is also self exalting if God is not residing inside. But when you talk about God, like Jesus we have to balance it with the kind of humility that Jesus had. Then, people will try and see both your claim to a divine connection and your humility and through the power of the Holy Spirit, that will speak to them in a real way.

And we can humble by being willing to share our weaknesses and our failures. Just share that emotion of smallness you feel when you can feel God's intense presence in your quiet time. Once you have done the sharing, the Holy Spirit will do His work and who knows, we might even get to see new spiritual life bloom in front of us.

My hope that each of us will be able to be true witnesses to both the grandeur of our relationship with God and the humbling nature of being close to God. I hope too that each of us will be able to be agents of new spiritual life all over Argentina and who knows where else. Let us pray.